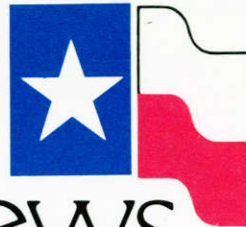


NON-CIRCULATING

News & Views



★ Texas Rehabilitation Commission ★ A Human Energy Agency ★

Volume 11 Number 4

April 1989

TRC Offices Tighten Accessibility Guidelines

The Commission has reaffirmed its commitment to making TRC offices barrier-free to people with disabilities.

The commitment took the form of tighter accessibility requirements added to TRC leases with the permission of the State Purchasing and General Services Commission.

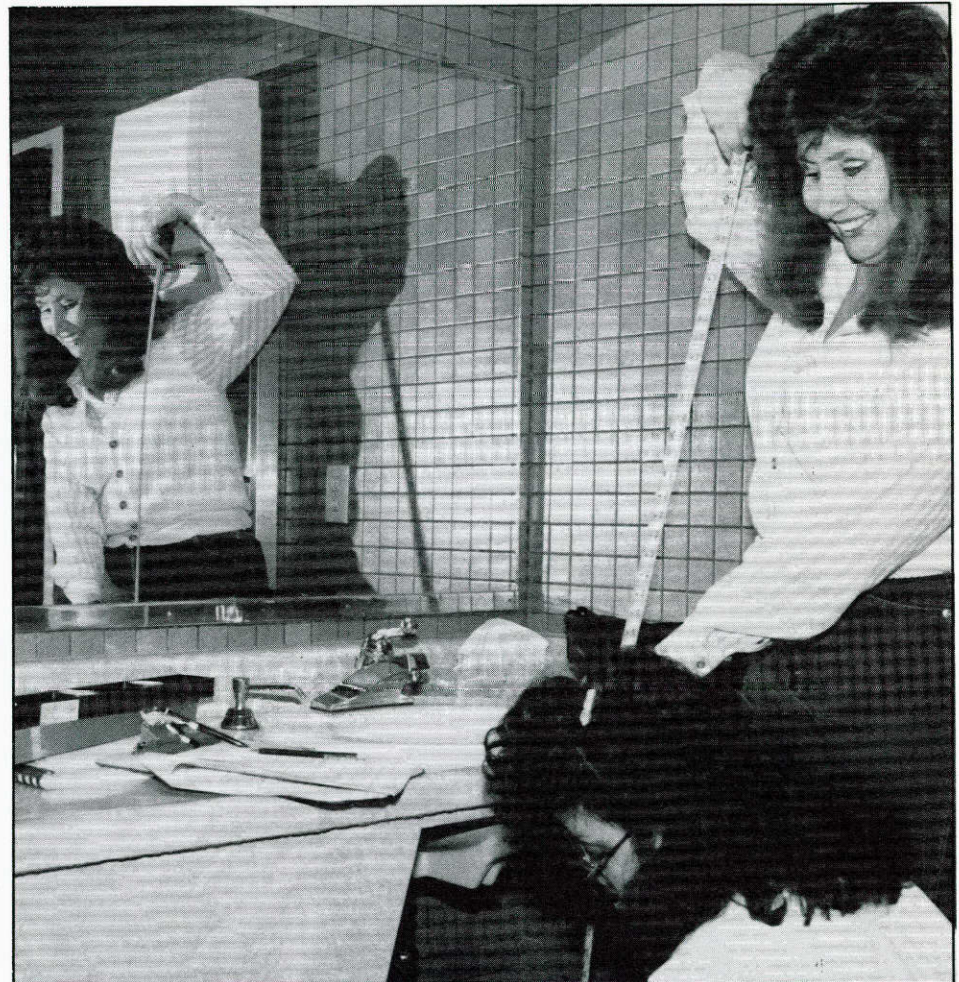
Each year, the Commission serves thousands of people with disabilities and has a growing number of employees who have visual or mobility impairments.

As a result, accessibility is one of the most important features of a TRC office.

For years, office lease contracts signed by the Commission have adhered to specifications for accessibility established by SPGSC, the governing agency for state office leases.

Although workable, SPGSC minimum specifications fall short of accessibility regulations published by the American National Standards Institute, the accepted authority on total barrier-free environments.

Continued on page 2



Ad techs from TRC offices statewide converged in Dallas April 11-13 for training on the new, tighter accessibility standards added to TRC leases. With rulers and checklists they scoured the Holiday Inn Brookhollow to see how it measured up to the new standards. Here, Ad Techs Gloria Penalver (standing), of the San Antonio Field Office West, and Marina Trevino, of the Harlingen Field Office, check out a sink in a public restroom.

Offices Tighten Accessibility *continued from page 1*

Recently, when modifications needed for accessibility at one field office exceeded SPGSC requirements, TRC officials decided to push for more stringent requirements.

In a letter to SPGSC Commissioner Lias "Bubba" Steen, TRC Commissioner Max Arrell outlined the need for increased emphasis on accessibility in TRC office leases. "The state minimum requirements addressing accessibility for people with disabilities . . . does not provide barrier-free accessibility for many of our disabled clients and employees," he said.

SPGSC agreed with Commissioner Arrell, allowing TRC to take the lead role in office accessibility by approving six additional standards in new TRC leases.

They include tighter elevator specifications for second-floor offices, automatic doors, rest rooms, and door and faucet hardware, among other things.

"Although other agencies may not comply with all accessibility requirements, we must," says Charles Tarver, director of administrative services. "We have to show that accessibility starts right here!"

According to Ray Minyard, assistant deputy commissioner for administrative services, getting the new requirements installed and approved by SPGSC was a complicated process.

"Charles Tarver deserves most of the credit," he says. "I don't see how he's stayed on top of it."

To familiarize TRC staff with the new leasing specifications, Minyard and Tarver held a three-day leasing training this April in Dallas.

There, TRC administrative technicians heard Tarver and regional administrative officers

explore in detail the accessibility specifications as well as ways to better enforce all other office lease requirements.

Outside the classroom, participants got "hands on" experience in evaluating lease space for accessibility. Armed with measuring tape and copies of the evaluation form, they scoured rooms at the Holiday Inn Brookhollow (the training location) for compliance to the specifications.

They used a 14-page checklist designed for the training, and for distribution to prospective bidders, to record their findings.

In addition, the ad techs examined accessibility from the standpoint of people with disabilities. They found that successful leasing agreements must

include helping bidders understand why accessibility is so important, especially for TRC offices.

"It goes beyond just signing a contract," says Tarver. "We must educate bidders."

Minyard predicts a broader role for TRC as "educator" on issues of accessibility. The newly-adopted additions to TRC lease requirements may impact other state agencies.

If they must also comply with these new standards, other agencies may need TRC expertise in making offices accessible.

"If we need to educate the entire state about accessibility and make sure all human service agencies are in compliance, we will!" says Minyard.



Ad Techs Delia Bazan (left), of the San Antonio Field Office North; Cheryl Thomas (center), of the Houston Regional Office; and Frankie Watson, administrative director in the Houston Regional Office, check angles on a parking lot curb cut.

Legislation at a Glance

- As "Rudd's Raiders," a group of fiscally conscious House Appropriations Committee members, continue riding herd on excesses in state agency budget requests, TRC weathered the committee's April 3 markup with some modest funding increases. The committee added \$1 million (over current funding levels) to TRC's vocational rehabilitation program, recommending that FY 1990-91 state revenue funding be increased to \$21,905,246 in each year of the biennium. The Senate Finance Committee marked up its version of the bill topping that figure by adding \$1.5 million over current VR funding in each year of the biennium. In the House, some items previously placed on a "wish list," for funding should state revenue become available, (see March 1989 "News & Views") became an official part of the Appropriations Committee recommendations. The only wish list item surviving the Senate markup is Personal Attendant Services. All other TRC program items in both House and Senate markup remain essentially at level funding with the exception of a

modest increase for Interagency Transitional Services in the House version. The full Senate and full House must now vote approval of their respective versions. Remaining differences must be ironed out in conference committee.

- It looks like state workers are in line for a much-needed pay hike in this Legislature. Bills recommending across-the-board pay increases have already been introduced in both the House and Senate. The House Appropriations Committee is taking a hard look at a fixed-amount pay raise of \$100 a month for state workers. Chairman Rudd of Brownfield hopes this figure can be boosted by the end of the appropriations process to help state workers keep up with rising inflation. He hinted that a pay hike in the next budget cycle could come through measures planned to enhance revenues without raising taxes. On the Senate side, the Finance Committee has asked Sen. Barrientos of Austin, author of SB 122, the Senate version of the pay raise measure, to chair a subcommittee which will consider a \$125 a month across-the-board pay increase for state employees.
- The House Appropriations Committee also gave a tentative "OK" to boosting the state contribution to employee health insurance from \$115 a month to \$130 in FY 1990 and \$155 in FY 1991. And not a moment too soon as the Employees Retirement System prepares to increase premiums

State Employee Recognition Day

Governor Clements has proclaimed Saturday, April 29, 1989, as State Employee Recognition Day. It is scheduled to coincide with National Public Service Week May 1-7.

This precedent-setting proclamation in Texas will be accompanied by state agency displays in the Capitol and speeches by state legislators in Austin. The public is encouraged to attend.

Legislative hotline number:

For more information on the status of legislation, call 463-1251 in Austin, or toll-free elsewhere in the state call 1-800-252-9693. Hotline hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

on state employee group health insurance starting September 1. Reports say premiums will go up an average of 22.6 percent. ERS Deputy Executive Director, James Herod doubts that even the Appropriations Committee's proposed increase in state contributions to the system will not completely offset skyrocketing premiums (look for story in next month's issue of "News & Views").

- It's up to Governor Clements (at this writing) to sign legislation making it unlawful to ride a motorcycle in Texas without a helmet. It passed both House and Senate vote in early April. The governor says publicly he is in favor of the bill. Physicians say the bill would surely decrease the growing number of disabling injuries and deaths resulting from motorcycle accidents each year. Highly vocal motorcycle lobbies continue to stand behind their right to choose.
- After several public hearings on accessible mass transportation in Texas (see March 1989 "News & Views"), Rep. Beauchamp of San Antonio sponsored a bill to make mainline public transportation accessible to people with disabilities. HB 2545 was referred to the House Transportation Committee which has scheduled a hearing on the bill April 18.

DDS Continues its Accuracy "Roll"

When you hit 100 percent, when you receive no return errors in the Federal Quality Assurance review of claims, what do you do for an encore? That is the problem that Disability Determination Services will have in the future. That's the kind of problem to have if you can pick it!

For the second straight month, DDS has received no FQA returns for Continuing Disability Review claims for the Social Security Administration (see March 1989 "News & Views"). In fact, for the months of January and February, only one return was received in the FQA review of initial returns.

This is particularly noteworthy in view of the 13,000-case backlog from which DDS has had to recover since September 1987. Once the workload became stable, DDS implemented a quality control plan which led to the present accuracy marks.

DDS also asked for a fiscal and management review from SSA. They weren't randomly selected; they asked for it!

Preliminary findings of the SSA team are gratifying to DDS management. The findings were reported in terms of "fine-tuning" rather than suggested major revisions.

Lenore Carlson, director of field operations for SSA, noted the DDS tendency for "total quality management" or doing the job correctly the first time. She also noted that the Texas DDS "consistently demonstrated an overwhelming positive attitude."

"We are extremely pleased with the results of this review," said DDS Deputy Commissioner Les Albrecht. "We seem to be on a roll in our relationship with SSA

staff. We are also focusing on more participation of employees, at all levels, in planning activities, employee development and recognition.

Seven reconsideration disability examiners in DDS Directorate 04 were recently recognized for demonstrated accuracy. In the year ending in February, each of them posted a zero return rate in the Program Evaluation Services sample review. For each DE, the sample equalled about 12 percent of his/her total cases during the year. These DEs are: Robert E. Lee, Unit 01; Larry Miller, Unit 01; Perry Watson, Unit 09; LaVonne Hummel, Unit 09; Roger Hight, Unit 11; Julie Casner, Unit 35; and, Molly Lovett, Unit 35.

DDD By Any C

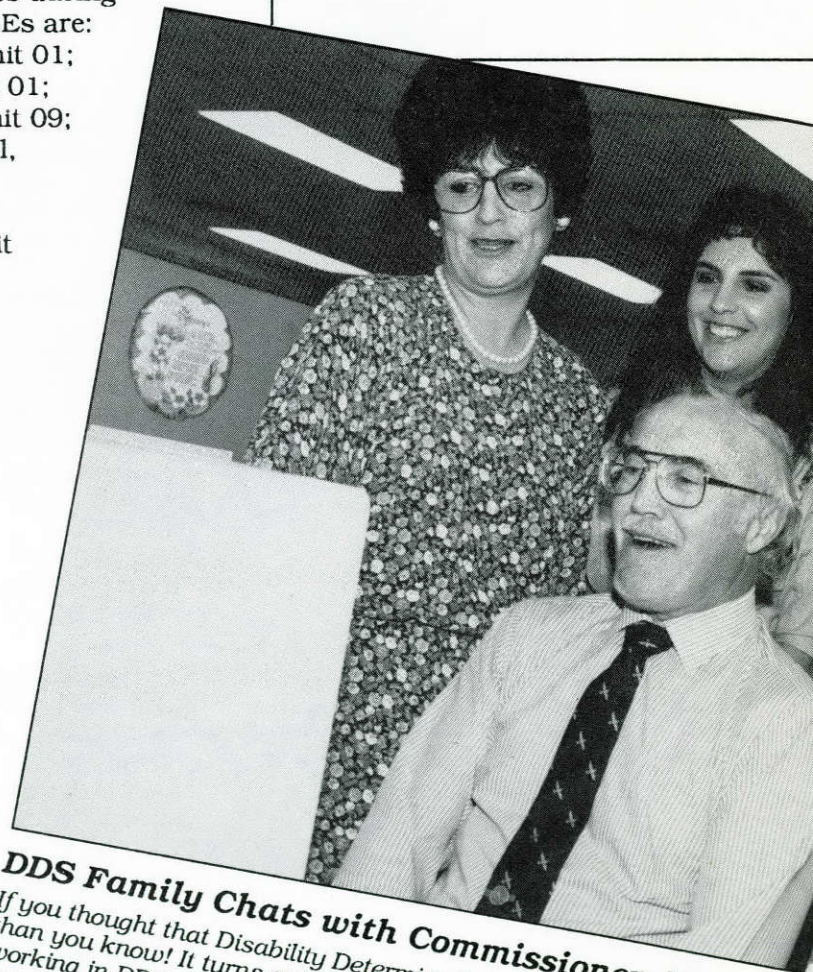
What you have known for years as Division is now Disability Determina

The name change, effective in Ma the "service" aspect of the federal dis

In addition, says Les Albrecht, dep determination, "We wanted to be con states administering the disability pr ministration. They are referred to by

The title change will also bring DD departments using the term "service"

Policy manuals and other official r reflect the recent change in title.



DDS Family Chats with Commissioner Arrell

If you thought that Disability Determination Services is one big family, you are right. More than you know! It turns out that there are several DDS employees who are working in DDS. Only one of many examples is Ampora Longoria (standing center) and Diana Nipp (standing right) watch with interest and amusement as Commissioner Arrell tests his password on a computer terminal.

Other Name . . .

the TRC/Disability Determination Services.

h, was made partly to emphasize ability program in Texas.

uty commissioner for disability sistent with agencies in all other program for the Social Security Ad- the SSA as DDSs."

S in line with many other TRC s" in their titles.

materials and documents will soon



ou're probably closer to the truth ave other family members ng left) and her

Things Look Brighter for DDS

Positive winds of change are blowing in Disability Determination Services that go far beyond a name change.

Automated offices and more opportunities for employee development, two things for which rehabilitation programs in TRC are well known, are looming in DDS's future.

There is every indication that the Social Security Administration will allow TRC to make an unprecedented internal adjustment to this 100 percent federally-funded program that could take this form:

- \$50,000 for employee development over and above the technical skill training now offered with planned increases of \$50,000 a year up to a total of \$250,000; and,
- consideration of \$3.5 million to automate disability examiner work stations.

"The SSA position on these items has softened considerably in recent months, and we are extremely encouraged. There is definitely light at the end of the tunnel," reports Executive Deputy Commissioner James L. Jackson.

The payback for this money, through normal attrition in employee turnover in DDS, is expected to be complete in 38 months, subsequent to which will result in an actual savings of \$1.1 million per year are expected.

"We feel we have certainly made a good case for this budget adjustment," said DDS Deputy Commissioner Les Albrecht.

Consumers Want Legislative Look at Attendant Services

"We're sending a message to the Legislature," says Bob Kafka, chairman of the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities Attendant Services Taskforce.

The message is this: if people with disabilities are to hold down jobs and become independent and productive, funding for attendant services must be expanded.

Attendant Services Day March 30 in Austin was the vehicle for the message. It brought people with disabilities and other advocates together in a concerned, united voice over the attendant services issue.

A morning workshop at the Sam Houston Building examined the issue. Afternoon visits to the Capitol brought the issue home to legislators.

"There is much dissatisfaction among Texas consumers over current attendant services," says Kafka. "One of the problems is that attendant services hasn't been an issue by itself; it's been part of other issues and programs."

The taskforce is asking the Legislature to double funding for the Department of Human Services Client-Managed Attendant Services program to \$2.3 million in FY 1990 and \$2.4 million in 1991. It's also pressing for the Legislature to install a personal care attendant program in TRC's budget for \$750,000 for FY 1990 and \$1 million in 1991.

"We may be too late to do much good in this Legislature," Kafka admits. "Maybe our impact will be better seen in the next two to three legislative sessions."

MILESTONES

TRC Service

MARCH 1989

- Region I**
15 years: Margaret Christian
- Region IV**
10 years: Julia Diaz
- Region V**
15 years: Rebecca H. Vasquez
- Region VI**
10 years: Sandra A. Wimberly
- DDS**
10 years: Drucilla Edrington
15 years: Kaye H. Rogers
 Gayle P. Sims
 Dennis R. Neitsch
 Jennifer L. Barker
 Edward A. Villarrea
 Mary S. Anderson
 Robert E. Lee
 Mary E. Raigosa
 Dora S. Martinez
- 20 years:** Phyllis Marie McKee
- Central Office**
15 years: Leella Cochran
 Wayne Sanders

Texas wheelchair marathoner, Bill Duff, and a dedicated crew set out on a grueling 5,000-mile push from Los Angeles to New York January 16. He stopped in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex in late March long enough to raise over \$10,000 for the Miami Project to Cure Paralysis. Duff plans to reach New York in mid-July. For more information on Duff's fund-raising marathon, write *Wheels Across America*, 1600 NW 10th Avenue R-48, Miami, Florida 33136, or telephone (305) 375-0250.

Charles Gloar, a quadriplegic from Harlingen, has created a Texas-based publication dealing with the issues and stories of people with disabilities called *Challenge: Magazine of the disABled*. Gloar's sister, LaVon Rothman, handles the marketing and advertising portion of the business from Austin. The first issue went to press in January. Gloar encourages free-lance writers to submit articles. For more information on advertising

and subscriptions, write *Challenge*, 2407 E. Washington St., Harlingen TX 78550. Telephone: (512) 425-8203.

Brain waves might soon be all that's needed for computer input. This breakthrough in thought-controlled computer input springs from the pioneering work of Dr. Erich Sutter of the Smith-Kettlewell Eye Research Institute in San Francisco. Sutter achieved dramatic results for a Portland physician with Lou Gehrig's disease by implanting electrodes directly into the brain (as opposed to taping them to the scalp) producing a very clear reading of brain waves. The Portland man has since been able to control the computer on his own with no use of muscles. Using brain waves, he can do word processing, use a speech synthesizer and turn on a radio or television set. For more information on the research, contact Dr. Pevehouse, Smith-Kettlewell Eye Research Institute, San Francisco, CA. Telephone: (415) 921-0438.

Enroll Now for TLPP Coverage

Annual open enrollment for the Texas Legal Protection Plan is scheduled for May 1 through May 31, 1989.

The plan offers state employees legal coverage of \$10,000 in work-related criminal matters. It also covers the defense of work-related civil matters if the Attorney General is unable to provide such defense. All work-related matters are covered on an indemnity basis, so that TLPP members are free to choose any attorney licensed in the State of Texas.

More than 1,500 participating attorneys statewide handle personal legal matters covered by TLPP at no cost to TLPP members.

TRC employees can pay for TLPP coverage through monthly bank or credit union drafts. The cost is \$7.92 for an individual or \$10.23 for a family.

For more information, call TLPP toll free at 1-800-252-9346.

The American Automobile Association has a new publication titled *The Handicapped Driver's Mobility Guide*. The 115-page booklet includes, among other things, tips on selecting vehicles, special equipment and maintenance along with information on road services and service agencies. The \$2 booklet is available to the public from AAA Traffic and Safety Department, 12901 North 40th Drive, St Louis, MO 63141.

Outstanding Employee Nominations Accepted through May

Now is the time to submit nominations for Outstanding Employees of the Year at TRC.

"This year, more than ever before, we are placing great emphasis on selecting outstanding employees," says Deeanne Barnett, Central Office coordinator for the program.

Nominations for outstanding employee can be made in Category I (salary groups 2-11) and Category II (salary groups 12-20). Outstanding employees will be chosen in both categories from each of the six regions, the Central Office and Disability Determination Services.

Employees can nominate any one of their colleagues to be recognized by all TRC employees for their contributions to the agency, its clients, fellow employees and the community.

May is
**MENTAL
HEALTH
MONTH**

Be good to yourself !

A Step Back In Time

During the 1950s . . .

- the minimum wage was about 75 cents,
- the Supreme Court outlawed racial segregation in public schools,
- felt-tipped markers were first marketed,
- Siamese twins were successfully separated by surgery,
- a wonderful new invention called air conditioning made the Missouri Pacific night train to the Rio Grande Valley a pleasant trip--even in August,
- a causeway was built from Corpus Christi to Padre Island with the expectation of creating another Miami Beach, and,

VR program director J.J. Brown started the 1950s with a pep talk to the all-male counselor staff which noted that women were entering the job market at unprecedented rates. Little did Mr. Brown know that, by 1989, 44 percent of the 397 TRC counselors would be female.

Nominations should be forwarded to the appropriate coordinator in each region, the Central Office and DDS. They are as follows:

Region I	David Bosh Lubbock Regional Office
Region II	Louise Wagner Fort Worth Regional Office
Region III	Jackson King Austin Regional Office
Region IV	J.D. Mihlhauser Houston Regional Office
Region V	Marjorie Brune San Antonio Regional Office
Region VI	Nancy Davis Longview Field Office
DDS	Patrice Thompson Disability Determination Services
Central Office	Deeanne Barnett Human Resources Management

Don't forget . . . the deadline for outstanding employee nominations is May 31. Take time out to nominate a fellow employee.

For more information, contact your local program coordinator.

Transitions

Lucy Balderas, secretary to **Les Lovell**, regional director for Region IV, was selected to become secretary to **Terry Smith**, regional director in Region V. Balderas began her TRC career in San Antonio in the early 70s.

Denise Green was recently selected to fill a Secretary II position in the Lubbock Field Office.

Tereza Hall, counselor in the Dallas Central Field Office, has become the new courtesy counselor for the Dallas Rehabilitation Institute. Hall was most recently liaison counselor for Parkland Hospital.

A. W. McGinnis recently joined the Commission as a counselor in the Lewisville Field Office.

Joe Mosel is moving back to Corpus Christi as area manager responsible for the Corpus Christi and Kingsville Field Offices. Mosel, an 18-year TRC employee, was most recently area manager in the LaMarque Field Office.

Louie Tirres has joined the TRC rehabilitation team as counselor in the El Paso Central Field Office effective April 17.

★ Applause

The following TRC employees recently received press coverage for the Commission: **Chris Cardinal, Gladys Diggs,** and **Ron Acuff**, all counselors in the Amarillo Field Office; **David Cohen**, counselor in the Baytown Field Office; **Gordon Graves**, area manager in the Dallas Field Office Southeast; **John O'Brien**, area manager, and **Connie Hawes**, counselor, both in the Dallas Field Office Southwest; **Les Austin**, counselor in the Duncanville Field Office; **Carolyn Dougherty**, counselor in the Ker-ville Field Office; **Katherine Streblo**, counselor in the Pasadena Field Office; **Terry Zimmerman**, counselor in the San Angelo Field Office; **Bill Glenn**, counselor in the San Antonio Field Office South; **Andy Alexander**, program specialist at

the Governor's Committee for Dis-abled Persons; **Janis Beard**, director of facilities management; **Amber Kelly, J. C. Cardwell, Kathleen Hurley, Roger Levy, Ted Thayer**, all program specialists at the Central Office; **Randy Jennings**, public informa-tion director; **Richard Palacios**, operations director for program services at the San Antonio Regional Office; **Mary Valentini**, regional director in the Lubbock Regional Office; **Debbie Chandler**, member of the Con-sumer Advisory Committee; and **Commissioner Max Arrell**.

Ted Thayer, program specialist in the Central Office, was recently presented a citation by Goodwill Industries of East Texas for his support of the Good-will Industries mission through-out the state.



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